



DACORUM AND CHILTERN POTTERS GUILD



Issue 35

Autumn 2020

2nd Lockdown Edition

Accounts and reminiscences
from our members and
coverage of our zoom
demonstrations.

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Cover: Slip decorated plate by Hannah McAndrew



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Editorial 12/10/2020



Ros McGuirk

With our first online AGM tidied away, now is the time for a leisurely read about your Guild and fellow members to find out what some of us have been up to during this time of change.

I sure you will agree, if you were with us, that the AGM was well planned and prepared, and efficiently delivered. It was at least as well attended as usual, with 28 present on screen, and took about the same time. Mary Anne and Ian sent out their notes in advance and we have printed out Mary Anne's report in full. Thus Angela's minutes are brief and succinct.

Nicole mastered the art of zoom polling for the competition and the results came through in the wink of an eye. Well done to all who took part. It may not have had the drama of the real thing, but it was well suited to our

new life style.

Look out for Judi's notes on the 'coffee socials'. They are quietly mutating into 'Meet your fellow makers' sessions as members generously step forward to offer a few tips and techniques from their own studios. Gay is working on our new Friday night format and we can look forward to our online meetings as the programme develops.

I am looking forward right now to meeting up with members on the market stall on Saturday and hopefully at the occasional garden gathering, as long as we are able. For the rest I will drop in on all the online meetings I can and without having to drive around Hertfordshire. Brilliant!

With a Big Thank You to all who have contributed to this edition, I leave you to read on and enjoy.



2020 AGM - Chair's report



Mary Anne Bonney

This report covers the year from 1st September 2019 to 31st August 2020, so begins with the very successful **Kingsbury Barn exhibition** - Thank you Jackie Harrop for recruiting and co-ordinating the team and for coming up with a plan that could fit in 35 exhibitors and thanks to all who contributed - your ceramic work, your energy, your time and your skill. We were fortunate with the weather and visitors were thrilled by the pots and the venue. Have a go - for school children and the public, was greatly enjoyed as was the members' social. We are grateful to Mr and Mrs Singer for their hospitality at the Barn.

My first year as Chair of the DCPG began at the **AGM in October 2019**: a packed hall, business swiftly accomplished and members crowded round the **Fitzwilliam Prize** judging table admiring the bird baths and bathing birds, waiting for our president and judge for the occasion, John Higgins, to announce the winner: Andrew Gardner, whose bathing parrot enjoyed a gold tap and running water and earned him the Stan Romer Trophy for a year. Second and third prizes went to Wendy Peters and Richard Ballantyne respectively. The Guild is very grateful to Sylvia Fitzwilliam for her sponsorship of the prizes, in memory of her late husband and the Guild's inimitable former Chair, Mervyn. Afterwards, John told the story of his action packed residency in Lintao, China, as participant in an international gathering of ceramicists, and demonstrating how - by slabbing, throwing and altering, he created the tea set which was his contribution to the gathering's final exhibition.

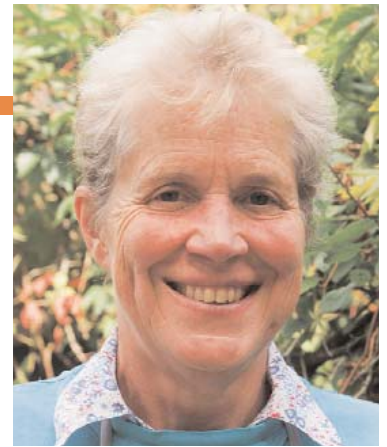
The have a go and sales teams held out little hope for the **Box Moor Autumn Festival**, on a particularly grey and wet October day,

but we negotiated the waterlogged field, set up and waited. Gradually, a trickle of interest became a steady stream and for the

last hour and a half the tutors were working non-stop, the helpers were frantically making balls of clay to satisfy the demand. Making the activity free seemed to banish any reservations people had about getting covered in clay in a muddy, leaky tent and a lot of happy new potters left holding soggy paper plates with their equally soggy creations. A good few purchased members' work from the Sales tent too. My thanks to all the helpers and to the Box Moor Trust for hosting us.

Friday night demonstrations began in November with David Wright and a master-class in his distinctive style of coiling and shared a multitude of useful hints about wood firing. Ruthanne Tudball, soda firer extraordinaire, followed, her fluid forms seeming to grow from the wheel. Margaret Gardner kindly stepped in at the last minute when the planned speaker had to cancel and enchanted the audience with her exquisite pearly miniatures. DCPG member, Elaine Wells punctuated a demonstration that included enough top tips for everyone to go away with a new technique to try, with insights into behind the scenes on the Great Pottery Throwdown

Thank you Gay Crommelin, programme secretary, for bringing us a fabulous range of skilled and generous demonstrators and thanks to all the members who ensure that meetings run smoothly, participants are refreshed and that the hall is left clean and secure at the end of the evening.



The Potters Open Day in March gave an intimation of what was to come: recently returned from Italy where coronavirus cases were rising, speaker Stephen Dixon elected to err on the side of caution and join by Zoom. He made a powerful case for the use of pottery as a medium for challenge and it would have been good to have live questions afterwards. Demonstrators Wendy Lawrence whose powerful, gloriously coloured pieces have a geological quality and Brendan Hesmondhaugh whose creatures created with a minimum of clay, seem ready to leap from their stands were both generous with their knowledge and creative insights. Refreshments were outstanding, many members made the most of Blue Matchbox's stall and a good time was had by all. Thank you to all the POD team, led by John, for a truly inspiring, energising day.

I am grateful to Judi Tribe for setting up and hosting **coffee meetings** in handpicked and vetted cafes - giving members the chance to chat, and to exchange ideas and tips. Many useful connections have been made at these friendly gatherings.

In November we set up a meeting to gather a team of people interested in relocating and firing the **wood kiln** which lies, dismantled, at the Box Moor Trust's Overbourne site and subsequently Amanda Toms made contact with the Chiltern Open Air Museum, with a view to working with them to set up the kiln on their site. Thank you Amanda for keeping an eye on the bricks and for working with Jerry Seabourn on the plan submitted to COAM. Sadly, lockdown intervened and we have not been able to make any progress on this yet. Thank you, too, to Angela Bowen who explored the possibility of working with the PaperTrail, to run firings on their site in Apsley.

Over the winter months Jackie and a small team refined plans for DCPG involvement in celebrating 100 years of the partnership between ceramic cultures (and families) inaugurated by **Shoji Hamada and Bernard Leach** and tickets for a day of lectures and demonstrations in April went on sale.

The Guild signed up to participate in the Alban Festival and applied, successfully, for a have-a-go stall at Art in Clay in August.

On 23rd March, lockdown intervened. Denis di Luca's demonstration was cancelled and the Hamada Leach celebration put on hold. The **committee continued to meet**, as it has done since, on Zoom and, as event after event at which the Guild was due to appear was cancelled, we agreed to focus on keeping members engaged with the Guild and, where possible, with making. Zoom coffee gatherings were planned and a 100g challenge put to members. During the summer, a number of members hosted socially distanced gatherings of no more than six in their gardens, I am grateful to the hosts for offering a welcome opportunity for some of us to meet face to face and share a more natural conversation.

Keeping in touch has been a priority and thanks go to Ros McGuirk and David Evans for keeping the **newsletter** on schedule - while the printer's closure meant we have not been able to send out hard copies of the last two issues, I hope that you have read the e editions - with numerous members' contributions they are a true celebration of the diversity and skill within the Guild. Nicole Lyster and Amanda Toms have kept busy ensuring that the Guild is visible on **Instagram** and **Facebook**.

Despite our lowered profile, we have had a



trickle of new **members**. Thank you Audrey Hammett for keeping the records up to date and secure, welcoming new members and making the Gift Aid Application.

As it became clear that in person meetings were not going to be possible for some time, **Gay** researched **demonstrators who were up for the challenge of presenting via Zoom** and Denis di Luca got the series to an unforgettable start, firing his raku kiln to the sound of cicadas on his Italian hillside. Since then, we have travelled to Deptford for Enrique Perezalba Red and to Scotland for a double bill from Hannah McAndrew and Doug Fitch. I am grateful to the team who have helped organise and host the demonstrations. We are getting better at it and even when we are able to meet in person, I suspect we will want to continue with Zoom from time to time, to enable us to connect with distant potters.

Looking ahead, we are still hoping to run the Hamada Leach celebration, plans are in hand for POD 2021 and we are booked in for the Alban Festival 2021. We are investigating venues for in person meetings which offer space for social distancing and as soon as circumstances allow, we will resume researching options for firings and for the wood kiln. We also intend to explore how we can extend the Guild's support to people working with clay in the community, perhaps by setting up small grants/prizes. In recent weeks - strictly speaking outside the remit of this report - Jackie has organised a stall at St Albans Saturday market, to promote the Guild and offer 3 members at a time the chance to display and sell their work.

A big decision the committee made this year was not to charge renewing members for their membership for 2020-21 because of the very uneven effect the pandemic has had on individuals' lives and livelihoods. The Guild is, however, still incurring costs and planning to resume activities which may, with the need for additional space/precautions/equipment, cost us more than in the past, **so I am asking members who can afford to contribute, to make a donation in lieu of their membership fee for the new membership year.** We will be sending details of how you can do this!

There have been **changes to the committee** in the course of the year: At the AGM in 2019 Angela Bowen joined as **secretary** and has taken on minute keeping, negotiating with the insurers and a lot more besides. After the AGM in 2019, Colin Hazelwood announced his intention to stand down as treasurer. I am grateful to him for nurturing the Guild's finances, for supporting events and for steering us through the process of registering the Guild as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and I am pleased to say that he continues as a trustee. Emily Good who oversaw the set up and maintenance of the website has decided that it is time to stand down from the committee and as a trustee in the hope of fitting more time for her own ceramics between the demands of family and job. Emily has been a valuable committee member and I look forward to her continuing involvement with Guild **I am very grateful to all on the committee** - trustees Colin Hazelwood, David Evans, Ian Jones, Jackie Harrop, John Higgins, Ros McGuirk and Emily Good (for whom the



AGM is her last appearance as a committee member) and non-trustee committee members Amanda Toms, Angela Bowen, Audrey Hammett, Gay Crommelin, Judy Tribe, Mandy English, Nicole Lister, and Tony Baxter for their support and the time, energy and skills they commit to the Guild.

I would also like to thank all the members who have contributed over the year to help with the smooth running of events, writing

for the newsletter, opening their gardens for gatherings, planning for the wood kiln and just keeping in touch. The Guild is here for you and if you think we are missing something, let us know.

Ian will report fully on the finances - I am pleased that the Guild remains solvent and is in a reasonable position to meet new challenges.

Mary Anne Bonney



<http://www.amandawestbury.co.uk/>

<https://www.amandatomsceramics.com/>

<http://www.debbiebent.com/>

<https://debbielawson.com/>

<https://deirdremcguirk.com/>

<http://www.dianatonnison.co.uk/>

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<https://www.fionabooyceramics.co.uk/>

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www.ranjena.com

<http://carolceramics.com/>

<http://www.viviennerodwell-davies.co.uk/>

www.dcp.org.uk



In the Studio with Enrique Perezalba - A Coil Master Class

 Nicole Lyster

This was another successful studio tour and demonstration brought to our armchairs via Zoom. 31 fellow DCPG members (and guests) enjoyed an evening with Enrique Perezalba in his Deptford Studio in SE London.

Enrique came to full time ceramics late in life, after being a dancer, scenographer and art director in London. But it was in Barcelona, Spain that he met Kate Malone and committed himself to ceramics. It was Kate who persuaded him to attend RCA and gain his Master of Arts, Ceramics and Glass in 2013. He still works two days a week in her studio as the main hand builder of her sumptuous ceramics, spending the rest of his time in his own studio developing his own body of work, which is sold via Adrian Sassoon

Enrique's current East vs West creations were first developed by him in 2015 from an idea sparked when sitting in his dining room looking



at a set of Chinese Porcelain Dogs on one side of the room and a soft Mickey Mouse doll on the other side of the room, and in his imagination they melded into one form. He has since developed the theme to represent the current world situation using the iconic images of Chinese dragons, lions and Buddha with the American Mickey Mouse in conflicted harmony with each other.

These sculptures are made in porcelain, from a solid block of clay which is then hollowed out and dried over many months in a specially created plastic 'greenhouse', to ensure the porcelain does not warp or crack as it dries evenly. Enrique never coils with



porcelain, it is too temperamental and reacts to the tensions it undergoes too significantly, resulting in more warping and cracking than the stoneware he likes to use for this method. So, for our exclusive master class Enrique concentrated on coil building, using Scarva Earthstone ES40 hand building clay (his clay of preference for coiling). Coil building was his main method for his creations throughout

his ceramic development; starting with double walled vessels, moving on to his Body Armour inspired series of works and continuing in his work for Kate Malone and his current fascination for celebrating small insignificant plastic bottles as huge ceramic edifices with lustrous glazes. For Enrique coiling is more versatile than other methods of making, as it is possible to move the clay in whatever direction you need it to go for the form you are making.

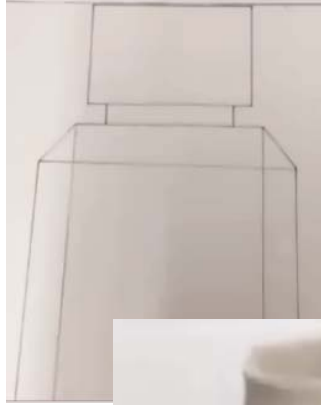


Enrique explained that he does not make sketches of his work before he starts to create them, they appear as vivid images in his mind which he recreates in clay. However, he does resort to the sketch book when scaling up objects. He suggested that an excellent exercise in clay handling was to take a small basic object and measure all its dimensions, then transfer these to a sketch book and scale them up by x5 or x10 to create a huge replica on paper which is then created in clay, by coiling. Enrique can then take these coil-built scaled models and create a press mould of them, from which he makes duplicates.

For our demonstration Enrique had set up a workbench and positioned his phone on a tripod so that we had a perfect and stable view of him working. He had a specific set of rules for successful coil building.

1. Properly wedged very soft clay - it is important that the clay is wedged thoroughly when

coil building so that the clay particles are lined up, rather than random. Soft clay is needed for coil building and it contains a lot of water, but the higher the water content in clay the more likely that the clay particles are randomly placed, rather than lined up. This will cause weakness in the clay and



result in more distortions in high fired work, so it is important to wedge it

thoroughly to get the clay particles lined up. Enrique fires all his work to stoneware temperatures and the clay undergoes intense pressure in the kiln so any weakness is more

likely to become apparent. He uses special hand building clay which contains a good quantity of grog to ensure the stability of the clay despite the many and varied shapes and directions it is pushed into.

2. Callipers - in the creation of properly scaled up objects it is essential that every dimension is measured and checked continuously.

3. Wire Harp - making slabs with a rolling mechanism stretches the clay and this is more likely to lead to warping in high fire temperatures. Clay has 'memory' and will

show its journey as it dries and is fired, so the less stress it is put under when it is wet, the less likely it will show when it is fired. Cutting slabs reduces the pressure on the clay.

4. A selection of potter's kidneys or ribs, from serrated edged to firm and super soft

smooth edged. These are used at various stages of the coiling process to ensure the clay is evenly distributed and properly 'combed' together when wet; and firmly compressed and almost burnished to an even shine when leather hard.

5. A selection of various saw blades with different serrations, from a butcher's blade to a hacksaw blade, cut to different lengths and some bent to different curves. These he makes himself so that they fit with his requirements exactly. Enrique stated that "The right tools are essential to do a good job, if they are right the job is much easier to do". He used these to 'comb' around the coil pot ensuring that the walls were evenly distributed, properly compressed and with the right texture for finishing off.

6. A pointed potter's knife with a blade that was long enough that it stayed pointed as this was what he used most for scoring his edges so they fused together firmly and reduced the potential for warping or cracking in the final firing.

7. Rolling pin for compressing the slabs used on the base of his coil pot.

8. Round bats of various sizes for the base. He does not handle the base very much as it stresses the clay and this can show up in the high firing, so the bats are often selected to match the size of the base he desires and once in place it need not be moved again until finished.

9. A water spray for that final burnishing of the leather hard surface, he was quite adamant that water should not be introduced into a coil pot during its making, as the water caused weak areas in the pot and these would show up in the final firing.

10. A good quality, smooth running heavy duty turntable was worth the investment to

ensure successful even creation of a large coil pot. It is imperative that you centre the base of your coil pot on the turn table and if need be sticking the bat to the turn table with wet clay so that it does not move off centre. Enrique constantly checked that the bat was still central throughout his coiling.



Coiling Lessons:

1. Rolling coils should be done through feeling, not sight, you don't need your eyes to feel that the clay is even all along its length - close your eyes. "Listen to the clay, know your material, each clay is different, so you must learn to trust what your clay can do". "Flat coils happen because of tension in your body, so relax and don't think so much about it". As Enrique coiled his fingers pointed upward, never down, ensuring that the clay was free to roll, rather than be pressed into the worktop.



2. Enrique makes thick coils so that his pot grows faster, but some artists roll thin coils, it depends on how you feel about the clay and how the clay feels about you. Whatever you do make sure the coil is even, an even coil means an even pot.

3. As you roll the coil the end can become hollow, always check it and pinch in the ends, or the hollow area can run down most of the coil.

4. When you have a coil that is the exact circumference of the base press it flat with your thumbs to make it a wall.



5. Scratch the base of your wall deeply (1.5 cm for such a large coil) in both directions and do the same with the circumference of the base. Deep scratches mean the clay knits together well and there is less weakness in the join. DO NOT use water with coiling, the clay is already soft and water heavy, if you add water you get reservoirs of water in the scratches and the clay particles become random and weaker.



6. Position the coil around the base and cut the ends to meet exactly, as you lift the coil support its whole length so that no part of it droops and is weakened. Scratch both ends and push them together twisting slightly to make sure they are joined well.

7. Push the coil into the base with one hand, supporting the walls as you do, working smoothly around the coil to keep everything even.

8. Use your fingers to push the clay down the walls into the base, on both sides, making sure that any clay you are removing is put back into the pot. Always have two hands in play, supporting the walls and working together to keep everything even.





9. Use a serrated blade or rib to comb the clay all around the walls inside and out, in an even motion, ensuring the bat is centred and all clay that is removed by the rib is replaced on the pot.

10. When the coil is firmly and evenly attached use your fingers to pinch up the wall from the base to the top in an equal rhythm, supporting the walls on both sides evenly. This moves the coil up to 10 - 15 cm and leaves the wall about 2cm thick.



11. Comb the walls again with a less serrated blade or rib to even everything up. You can comb the wall out or in at this point, defining the starting shape of your pot. Form the top edge into the correct starting point for the rest of your pot.

12. As you comb the walls a double lip develops at the top. Pinch this together and compress it with your fingers to even it out. Enrique prefers not to cut the top off as this loses height.



13. Forming a wide shape Enrique pushed the clay down into the base from the inside supporting the walls with his hand on the outside. He took the clay to the limits of self support and left it to one side to really firm up for the next stage of building. He explained that if the base has a lot of clay to support it can be made thicker and then thinned out once it was firm enough to support the walls without stress. As the clay was widened it had more area to cover and so thinned out more. For creating a thinner shape the clay needs to be combed upward and pushed inward with the supporting hand, this pushed the clay together making the walls thick, so at the same time he moved the clay upward so it became taller as it moved inward.



14. Finish for the day. Coiling is a slow steady process, the clay cannot be rushed. The clay is too soft to build onto, it needs to firm up. Leave a strip of thin plastic around the top edge to keep it soft, but leave the base uncovered to allow it to firm up. Be aware of how the air flows in your studio, a draught down one side of the pot will make it dry unevenly and it will warp. Some potters leave it on a turntable, but a loose plastic cover will keep the draughts off and allow the pot to firm up evenly. Even drying means an even pot, less weakness and less work to do the next day to get it right again. The bigger the pot the more these drying variants affect the evenness of the form and the greater the weaknesses that develop from uneven application, joining and drying.

15. Before building the walls any higher on the second day, turn the pot over and really work the base to a finished standard. Large pots are difficult to turn over and work on, so get the underneath as perfect as you can

before building up.

15. Before building the walls any higher on the second day, turn the pot over and really work the base to a finished standard. Large pots are difficult to turn over and work on, so get the underneath as perfect as you can before building up.

16. Throughout the coiling process Enrique consistently refers to his scale drawings and uses his tape measure and callipers to ensure the form is growing in the correct way, and is always centred on the turn table. He never uses a template to help his form.

17. When a piece is finished he can create a press mould of the form, so that it can be duplicated. He explains that the joining of the two halves has to be done with care, as this is the weakest point in the vessel. If the clay isn't scored properly and compressed evenly it will crack along this line, if it is compressed too much in the join, the clay in this area will expand slightly and leave a visible join seam down all around the vessel.





18. Before a piece is left to dry, Enrique uses a soft rib and a spray of water to burnish it all over. This is the only time he allows additional water onto his work.

All Enrique's work is high fired in oxidation. He uses a bought high gloss white for his

porcelain sculptures but mixes his own glazes for his other forms, firing them several times over with different layers of glaze to get flow and movement in the glaze. He ensures that they are fired on a tray to catch the runs and drips. He often uses the same glaze with a different firing cycle to achieve different glaze results, liking to 'let the glaze do whatever it wants to do' rather than trying to control it.

Enrique was generous with his time and skills, happy to share his clay insights and answer our many varied questions as he worked. He wanted to ensure we had seen the whole coiling process before we left. He told us that the thing we should remember when coiling was "don't think about it". The evening was very well facilitated by Gay Crommelin and thoroughly enjoyed by all, including Enrique, and we left with greater insight into successful coiling of large forms, and enthusiasm for the next zoom adventure in clay.



Zooming Together Our Programme of monthly meetings



Gay Crommelin - Programme secretary

Saturday 13 Feb 2021,

10am – 12 noon.

Christine Pike ceramic sculptor who works on stylised figures.

<http://www.christinepike.com/>

Saturday 13 March.

POD Online. All day event (with breaks)

Friday evening 9th April.

Imogen Noble. Inspired by the aesthetics of

anagama fired pots in Japan, Imogen uses found materials and a large saggar to achieve similar effects in an electric kiln.

<http://imogentaylor-noble.com/>

Friday evening 14 May.

Midori Takaki, ceramic sculptor making figures and faces that tell stories.

<http://www.midoritakaki.co.uk/>

DCPG member Vijay is a little difficult to pin down! He comes across as a man of many talents with a global outlook, a true polymath.

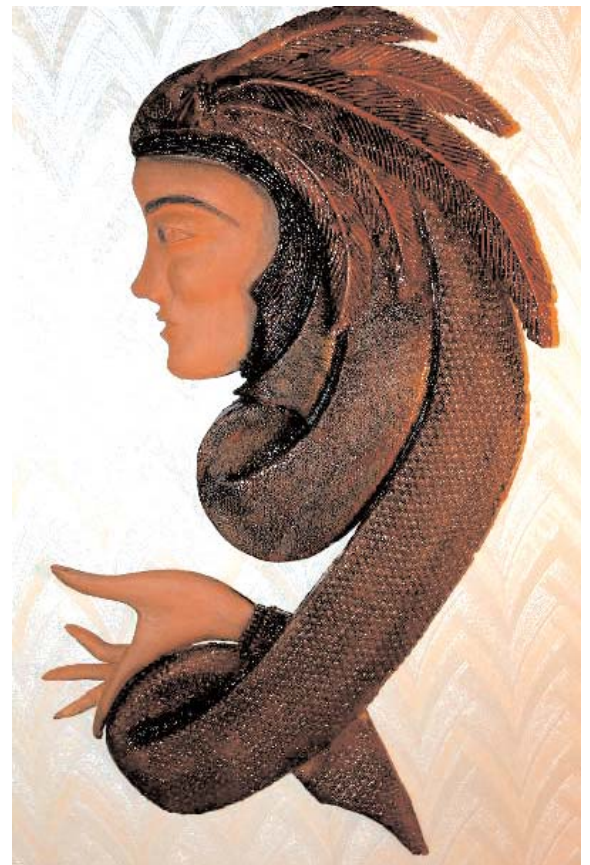
He was born in Kenya and educated in a number of countries. His family eventually came to the UK where he studied chemistry. After graduating he worked for a Water industry but soon discovered his aptitude for engineering, so changed direction within the company. He studied hydrology and took on multidisciplinary roles in software, process development and project management. Eventually he started a marketing business based in Spain. Now he is partly retired, due to ill health, and is enjoying his interests including ceramics.

He started his creative journey with stained glass but soon





became enthralled with clay and the history of ceramics and art. Reflecting his own life, his inspiration comes from a multitude of sources from the ancient world to the



arts and crafts movement of the 19th century, and various ceramicists from around the globe, from the Far East to South America.

Inspired by the high quality of craftsmanship of bygone eras, he specialises in hand built sculptures, beautifully shaped and refined, their details often picked out with a wash of metal oxides.

They illustrate his love of the challenges, joys and disappointments posed by ceramic processes, and a passionate and inquiring mind.



Diary of Events



October / November 2020

26 – 27 Oct.

Oxford Ceramics Fair. **Cancelled**

30, 31st Oct and 1st Nov.

Potfest in the Pens.

Only for the truly fit and hardy! Bags of atmosphere and lots of pots.

www.potfest.co.uk

5 – 8 Nov. Made in London – Marylebone.

The Design and Craft Fair where you will find over 120 exhibitors across all media (ceramics, wood, textiles, precious metals, glass etc).

This show has now gone online. See <https://madelondon-marylebone.co.uk/>

14 – 15 Nov.

Art in Clay Farnham. **Cancelled**



Using the raku kiln for adding horsehair decoration to sigillata pots

Beverly Benson

At one of our Zoom coffee mornings Ian mentioned that he was opening his kiln at 600° to add horsehair decoration to pots he had



covered with terra sigillata. John had a quiet fit; we had been told that opening the kiln at that temperature would damage the elements. He wondered if using the raku kiln would work and suggested this to Ian.

We hadn't used the raku kiln for ages. For us, it is usually a social thing: raku in the garden and barbecue on the patio; no alcohol until the flames are out, kind of thing... We usually have a table of random pieces of highly grogged, fired pieces for people to play with and a box of commercial raku glazes. The only rule is: you painted it, you take it home.

Ian's pots were beautiful. He uses B17C, wheel thrown, burnished and then coated with terra sigillata. On one, he had added blue stain to the terra sigillata, giving the pot a blue hue.

We usually use the sophisticated 'it looks a bit shiny' method of knowing when a raku firing is ready. Ian has a proper temperature gun, because he only wanted his pots to go up to 600°. The first one out was put on a small pile of sawdust

and then draped with horsehair. Both the sawdust and the hair burned at once and the effect on the pot was beautiful, but unfortunately the thermal shock was too much for the pot and it cracked. Ian was philosophical - he has a 'gold, mending kit' that he is looking forward to using.



The second time John took the lid off the kiln and Ian draped the horsehair over the pot while it was still in the kiln. They replaced the lid and let the

pot cool more slowly. It was really effective. The pot did lose its sheen, but Ian plans to wax and polish it.

The temperature does seem to be crucial: if the pot isn't hot enough the burned horsehair does not seem to 'take'.

We had a very enjoyable afternoon and learned a lot from one another.

This is certainly a technique that warrants further play!





A Guyana Firing

 by Jerry Seaborn

From 1977 to 1988 I was employed by Taylor Woodrow International (TWI) as a Construction Planner, mainly in their Head Office at Hanger Lane, London (you may remember the Four Men Pulling the Rope sculpture that was in front of the building). I mostly worked on programming and scheduling plant and equipment for major overseas projects, including visiting the country. In April 1981 I was asked to go to the Tapakuma Irrigation Project TWI in Guyana, South America. This project had fallen behind schedule and required an update to their programme.

Approximately 90% of the population of Guyana live on the thin cultivated coastal strip which borders the Atlantic Ocean. Going inland, the ground steadily rises to a mountainous interior, and this is all savannah and jungle, and pretty inaccessible.

The coastal strip is very low lying and swampy, and requires drainage canals and pumps to make it productive. This is where all the country's crops, including sugar and rice are grown. The TWI project was for the reinstatement of the old drainage canal system, the replacement of some of the old pumping stations and the construction of new canals and pumps. Tapakuma is on the coast about 100km north of the capital Georgetown. Even though it lies on one of the only roads in the country it is not easy to get to as you have to cross the Essequibo River via a rather rickety ferry.

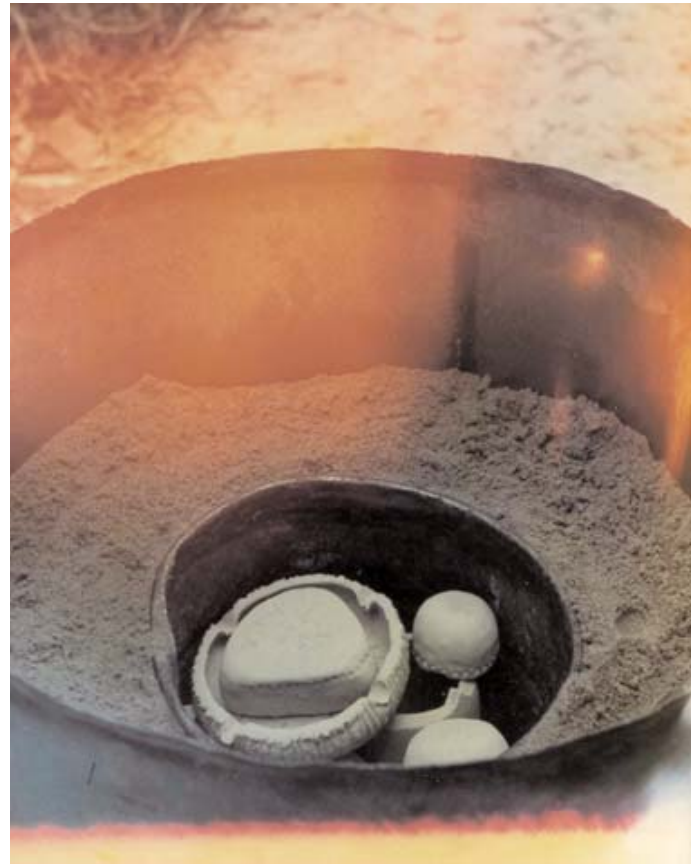
Digging out the new canals revealed a layer of pure looking, almost white clay. I collected a quantity of this material and over a number of evenings, made a number of pinched, slabbed and coiled pots. Unfortunately my camera let light into the film and I only have a few really bad photos of these items.

However I do have a reasonable photo of the kiln I made. This is a simple updraught design, made from an oil drum with another smaller drum inside with insulating sand packed in-between the two. This was placed on two rows of bricks with steel fire bars, and a steel plate with metal chimney, placed on top. Sand was then placed on top as further insulation. There was plenty of scrap wood to use, and so once all the pots were dry, which was pretty fast given the tropical conditions, I fired the kiln over a period I no longer recall, but was at least long enough to get the metal chimney red hot and glowing. There were no casualties among the pots, even though the inner metal container distorted in the heat and folded itself down over the pots.



The pots came out a faint pink colour with a small amount of flashing. I gave away all the pots to the TWI personnel working on the project except one, a double pinch pot joined together, which had the best flashing. However, I no longer have it and can't even remember what happened to it. I wonder if any of the others exist? All this in the space of a calendar month, as I completed my work and returned to the UK in May.

I have a number of memories of my time working in Guyana, including travelling by shallow punt up country through the swamps where there are no roads. We disturbed clouds of large electric blue butterflies and saw local villagers travelling by punt to church with about one inch freeboard, due to everyone crowding on, and all dressed up in their Sunday best, singing hymns and waving happily as they travelled along. I'm sure I have a photo somewhere, but have failed to find it. I also have memories of other visits to other countries, a highlight of



which was getting to see the 1986 Fletcher Brownbuilt International Pottery Award Exhibition, at the Auckland War Memorial Museum in New Zealand.



I also bought a pot back from NZ, it was an unglazed pit fired bottle, with lots of flashing. You should have seen the looks on faces of the others in my party, when I showed them. Also from Kuala Lumpur, I bought back a fairly large planter that had been thrown by the grandfather of the owner of a mechanised plant pot factory. His throwing

skills had been sidelined by the move to mechanisation, and no one else could now throw those big pots. I enjoyed my time with TWI, it was so interesting travelling round the world to places off the beaten track at a moment's notice, Monday in London, Thursday in Saudi Arabia.



Potfest



A letter to the Editor from Matt Cox

This year Potfest in the Park was postponed till early September and Potfest Scotland which is held at Scone Palace, Perth, was postponed till the end of last month. Being unable to travel that far this year I was curious to find out what happened at the only major ceramics shows to have run up to now. I asked Matt Cox the organiser how the Scottish show went and he sent this reply.

“Potfest Scotland was a superb event. We had obviously had to limit visitor numbers due to Covid restrictions but with social distancing measures in place, exhibitors and visitors wearing masks, sanitiser stations dotted around the site and numerous other precautions everyone seemed to have an enjoyable weekend.

We were blessed with wall to wall sunshine so warm days but very cold nights and a



Potfest in the Pens is to run
from Oct 30 to Nov 1st.

couple of quite hard frosts (I think those that had travelled up from the south and decided to camp had a harsh introduction to Scottish nights under canvas).

The public that visited seemed interested, engaged and keen to buy. We noticed that a large number of visitors this year were new to the show, perhaps this was down

to us using more social media advertising rather than traditional print media. Who knows but it bodes well for the future. Sales figures were up so even with a reduced footfall we had a far greater spend per head and the average exhibitors take was well up on last year too.

This very much mirrors what happened at the Park and hopefully we'll see the same at Potfest in the Pens at the end of the month.”



60 Years of Collecting

 by Colin Hazelwood

My first acquisition was a coffee set by Harry Davis. (1) It was given to me as a wedding present by an aunt, herself a hobby potter, who knew of my attempt to make pots as relaxation at university. And so I started my collection!

Harry Davis was then running the Crowan pottery in Cornwall. The demi-tasse cups are very delicate and decorated with confident iron brushwork on a celadon glaze. Years later when I mentioned these to Murray, who knew Harry, he told me that Harry was able to throw these cups at great speed. The set is still complete. Does anyone drink from demi-tasse these days?

For a number of years, business commitments meant that I was not able to make, but I continued to buy from time to time and some purchases have been more significant than others in that they helped me to find my own style.

I was on a visit to Ludlow when I entered the shop/studio of Andrew Crouch. I admired and purchased a celadon glazed bowl with a delicate fluting. (2) "How do you make the delicate fluting", I asked. "With something as simple as a paperclip" came the reply. I have been using the paper clip ever since, albeit on an entirely different body and glaze.



In mid 'pottery career' I purchased a cookie jar by Richard Batterham. It has a celadon glaze which contrasts with the foot which is exposed rich stoneware clay. (3) It was from this point on that I began to use a rich grogged body and expose it on many of my own pots.



During the non-making years I purchased my first faceted tea bowl by Micki Schloessing. (4) Some years later she was at Waterperry in person and kindly showed me how she makes the facets. I have been using her method ever since. I have visited her studio and added to my collection.

One Friday some years ago Lisa Hammond gave a demo. I was particularly attracted to a large salt glazed platter she brought for sale. It was not cheap and I did not want to buy without being sure that my wife would be happy to give it house room. It did not sell, so a few days later we drove up to her studio, then in the disused railway station at Greenwich.



Approval given: purchase made (5) (and a tea bowl). I have been collecting her tea bowls ever since. My notes show how a maker is able to increase prices as their reputation flourishes; the sum I paid for the big platter would not buy a small tea bowl today.

I often have to go to North Norfolk and on one occasion I detoured to visit the studio of Ruthanne Tudball and came away with a big ginger jar (6) which admirably displays her technique of post throwing shaping of a still soft pot.



If you know these peoples' work, you will know that many employ salt or soda glazing. Ruthanne is the author of the Ceramic Handbook on soda glazing. Not surprisingly they have been the inspiration for my attempts to vapour glaze for as long as I have been in our Guild. This has resulted in much soda kiln firing fellowship - but very few pots worth exhibiting!

Despite my love of the salt/soda surface, the pride of my collection could not be more different. It is a bowl by Duncan Ross. (7) I first encountered one of his terra sigillata pots in Primavera in Cambridge, then, while visiting the annual Farnham fair, went to his nearby studio. He invited us to survey the collection of pots he had prepared for a forthcoming exhibition. Finding it difficult to make a decision, and, at his prices, not wanting to make a mistake, we retired to the refectory at nearby Guildford cathedral for lunch and, unpressured, considered the options. Fortunately, we both preferred a particular bowl and we returned to his studio to pay more for a pot than we had ever done before or since.

To judge by his prices at a recent CAL exhibition we made a good investment, but it is the last pot we would part with.

I treasure several pots made by friends in the Guild, but I think it would be inappropriate to make specific mention here.





Fitch and McAndrew - getting to know Hannah and Doug via Zoom



Saturday 5th September 2020 - by Mandy English

I first met Hannah and Doug when volunteering at Art in Clay as a student last year, delivering Farnham event leaflets to stall holders for Richard Miller. I felt they stood out not only because of their passion for their work but their warm welcoming smiles and happy natures. With children playing around them, they lit up their corner of the marquee.

This same enthusiasm and energy came across again when Guild members had the privilege of meeting them virtually in their home in Dumfries and Galloway, during their 2-hour talk, videos, and demonstrations. Being able to have a unique real-time insight into their lives and their work via Zoom was, for me, more intimate on this occasion than a physical demonstration. There were about 30 of us who signed in to share the morning and by the end, I felt we were all relaxed, and chatting with Hannah and Doug as if we were there in their studio with them.

For self-confessed first time online demonstrators they were apologetic about having had to experiment with photo lights as they had not yet got their studio lights set up and that their new workspace was still very much 'work in progress' as they'd only moved into it a few weeks previously. They do at least have running water and explained lots of projects are on the go with nothing finished completely yet. However, the new media, building concerns and worries about the internet connection did not faze these experienced potters, who were clearly comfortable with their work and way of life and it was exciting to hear their future ambitions.

Videos

Hannah and Doug started by showing a couple of short videos - one entitled, 'Life, love and poetry' which gave us a flavour of



their rural family life. The second was a tour of where they now work, adjacent to their house, having originally started a studio on the site in an old caravan. Their new space contains several wheels, including an old kick wheel they rescued from another pottery, a wood burning stove which is waiting to get fitted, and a separate kiln room with electric kilns. Although the videos they created for us were the first ones to share for an online demonstration, they told us they do have a YouTube channel where they encouraged us to have a browse of more videos about their life and work in Galloway. https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWk0oFol_9i3gbnk59-F7gQ

Working so remotely has impacts on their time - it is 14 miles to the nearest supermarket (although they grow as much food as they can) and taking their children to nursery school is a daily 50-mile round trip. Their village is 1.5 miles away and only contains a church, but the craft community is fantastic. A survey in 2000 showed their area has more crafts people per head of population than anywhere else in Europe.

Hannah's plate and background

Explaining how she starts with spiral wedging, Hannah demonstrated making a plate using 4.5kg of standard red earthenware clay from Valentines Clays and chatted about her background.



After graduating from Manchester University in 2000, she moved to Galloway as an apprentice to Jason Shackleton for 12 months, who introduced her to slip trailing, sgraffito and traditional pottery techniques. She was paid in 'bread and apples' and as her parents had moved from Lancashire to Galloway, she was able to live at home with them while she worked.



While Hannah was throwing her plate, Doug continued the story of how they originally met and worked together in Devon, then continued

working for a while in alternate homes before settling in Scotland, opposite Hannah's parents' house. They had tried to buy Michael Cardew's pottery when it came up for sale in Cornwall - they had dreams of making slipware as he had - but it was not to be. Although the property, owned by a farmer, has now been demolished and Cardew's old kiln has a preservation order on it, Doug has managed to become the proud owner of one of Cardew's kick wheels and some of his moulds.

Hannah showed us her wheel which was fitted with a batt head. She uses batts for her plates as they help stop warping but also, as the rims 'rise up' overnight and if some re-throwing was needed, the bat negates having to re-centre the clay plate. She makes her plates deep enough (about 1.5cm) to turn a foot ring. Turning is done after decorating so the plate is deep enough to support the slip applied on top first, otherwise the thinner foot ring slumps under the weight of the extra slip. She said, yes, she must be incredibly careful she does not disturb the decoration!

Doug's 2-piece bellied jug

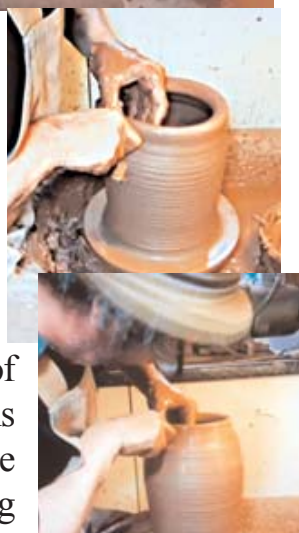
In contrast to Hannah, Doug uses bulls head wedging and his clay is grogged otherwise it would be too smooth for his bigger and bellied pots. While coning and throwing an 8kg lump of clay, he explained how he buys grog granules from Almondsbury Brickworks in Bristol and now fires them first before using. Previously he had discovered problems as some granules had rehydrated in his clay and became loose.



He either includes the granules when using his pug mill, or simply wedges them in, giving his pots, 'tooth and texture'. Clay from turnings is reclaimed as much as possible then blended with fresh clay. He likes to throw with slurry and his larger pots are joined in sections, as he was going to demonstrate.



Focussing back on his jug, Doug explained how he uses a gas blow torch to dry his main bellied body to be able to attach a separately thrown neck; usually it takes about 5 minutes to take the 'shine' off the pot. He warned that although the blow torch was noisy, if it rained, we would be drowned out by the noise of the rain on their tin roof! As he turned the wheel slowly, he pointed out tiny pieces of grog which had surfaced to create textures around the form, which he likes. He moved to quickly throw a neck piece on his kick wheel - his tip when joining pieces are to finish



off the inside first, then you can smooth the outside by throwing more easily. He likes wooden ribs and often uses a serrated kidney to



create patterns as he likes how the glaze sits in the grooves.

Firing

Both Hannah and Doug's work is fired to 1080 degrees C with a one-hour soak but they have fired up to 1120-1140 as it seems the clay can take it. Although they would like to once fire for environmental and financial reasons, right now, space is an issue, so bisque firing allows them to stack up the work. They yearn to get a wood kiln built on site too as the nearest one is 25 miles away in a corner of a field - it was last fired in October 2019. Being so far away, they have to camp next to it as there are no other facilities nearby and during lockdown they could not get there anyway.

Their ambition is to purchase some adjacent land as they feel that due to the local houses being made of wood, and then the nearby forest, it would not be responsible to fire a kiln in their backyard! Their source of wood was mainly from surrounding farms' pallets, which were just broken up as they could not be reused due to health and safety restrictions. However, since a wood chip plant was built locally and supplies of pallets are now limited, they also buy in lump wood from a collective in Dumfries.

Despite not being fully fit after contracting coronavirus just before lockdown, they are still hoping to fire the wood kiln this year and do their annual online exhibition during the last week in October. This will be their 5th year exhibiting this way and Hannah showed us the beautiful reference brochures they had had printed for each one: she advocates using a professional photographer.

Selling online

The platform they use to host is Issuu, which generates a page turning catalogue and is sent virtually around the world. They find about 50% of their sales come from the UK, the rest from places like Australia, New Zealand, Canada, America and Japan. They think Japanese customers especially appreciate their work as it is influenced by British tradition and does not try to emulate oriental pots. Packaging is an important part of their overseas distribution. They never bother labelling parcels 'Fragile' as feel this would not bring any guarantees! They use a lot of bubble wrap, wrapping work so handles can't be felt through the packaging, then using a cardboard box with a double skin. They keep packaging from pots they buy to recycle such as polystyrene chips, unless the chips are used by the children in large boxes as 'ball pits'! They also hope to invest in a cardboard shredding machine, like the one used by Bandana Pottery.

Glazing, Slips and Decoration - Hannah

Hannah answered a question about the glazes they use - all variations of a honey glaze - a rich honey (using a Michel Eden recipe), a medium honey and a pale one. They are fritted

lead glazes which they have tested in Stoke-on-Trent to confirm food and user safety and Hannah says they give a fabulous deep sheen, nothing like anything in her experience. For decoration, they make all their own slips from ball clay - a white, green, and black - the black is 80% clay body and has iron and manganese added. Doug also uses red slip made from clay in the field where his old workshop was in Devon.

Hannah continued her demonstration decorating a plate she had made about a week ago and kept under plastic drying out, so it was pretty



leatherhard. She advocated the use of home-made slip trailers, hers being made from bicycle inner tubes and demi-john corks, wired together, and sealed using masking tape. She keeps them from blocking up by making sure the slip is of single cream consistency and occasionally using a wire to poke the nozzle. Her plate was held over the slip bucket while she poured over the front of the plate, with one turn to complete the coating, giving the plate a shake for the slip to blend so she didn't get any lines.



For her designs, Hannah is inspired by 16th and 17th Century Staffordshire pots and the work of Thomas Toft. Sketch books record her ideas, although she told us that she does not often plan her designs unless she is making commemorative plates which require words, therefore careful spacing. Doug said Hannah has an accurate spatial awareness contributing to the ease in which she applied her slip patterns.

Hannah started by applying a ring border to her plate as she says it gives her a frame to work within and likes to work on a wet slip background as the trailed slip settles better into the base. Her patterns are outlined, then filled in, taking care to test the slip trailer on a board first, to ensure the slip comes out easily and repeatedly cleaning the nozzle.

Feathering techniques are applied using a strand of fine bristle. Doug talked about the 'potters' privilege'; he likes seeing work at this wet stage, which he much prefers as it looks like melted chocolate! Drying times are in the hands of the outside temperature and can vary considerably.



Doug's techniques and sprigging

While Hannah enjoys control of what she does, Doug explained he is the opposite and prefers a quicker, freer slip application. He demonstrated his own method by drawing a bird on a press moulded squared plate and you could see his fluid way of working. He feels press moulded work tends to be more robust and always leaves plates to dry upside down on their rims. He recommended 'Slipware in the Collection of the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery (Potteries Museum)' as an excellent reference book, available on Amazon! He makes a lot of dishes for the Goldmark Gallery in Uppingham and fires them at the top of the wood kiln to get his iridescent glaze. Both Hannah and Doug also send stock to the gift shop at the Fife Arms Hotel in Braemar which holds a unique art collection.



Doug enjoys creating relief effects on his bellied pots, simply by pressing finger sized pieces of clay in a pattern around the pot.

Doug's designs are inspired by old archaeological surveys he was interested in as a schoolboy and walking in fields collecting bits of old English pottery, hence identifying more with Michael Cardew than Bernard Leach, who was influenced by Japanese works.



One final technique demonstrated by Doug was sprigging. His love heart lines applied as coils to one of his bellied pots were carefully pressed on, then he used his red slip to brush on over the top which secured the sprig coils. He also showed us his use of stamps - individually made to apply to small balls of clay; circular balls are attached to his pots using a small amount of slip, then stamps are used to press into the balls, flattening and securing them at the same time as imprinting a design.





We were finally treated to a quick display of Hannah and Doug's collection of traditional pots and ceramic works in their main house - commemorative works such as a lambing chair and cradle, a puzzle pot made in 1835, baking dishes, money boxes, bird whistles, children's work presented to them as birthday presents and a large collection of studio pots with work from artists such as Clive Bowen were somehow arranged around their living space.



Stepping briefly inside Hannah and Doug's world was educational and inspirational at the same time. Learning about their work, seeing them excel at what they do, was equal to witnessing first-hand how they meet the challenges of running a rural studio pottery, combining family life and being true to their dreams every day.

We thank them for their precious time.

<https://fitchandm-candrew.co.uk/>





Home is Where the Art Is

 Pratima Kramer reports on her recent BBC1 TV appearance.

It started with an email inviting me to apply for an art competition on BBC1. The researchers had found my details in the Great Northern Contemporary Craft Fair catalogue. Little did I know that they were looking for artists for the second series of Home is Where the Art Is! I don't like being photographed let alone the prospect of being filmed for national TV so my initial response was NO.

In the programme three artists are tasked to create pieces of art for people they have never met. They respond to a brief given by the host for a particular or special event in their lives - in my case their 25th wedding anniversary. Each artist takes inspiration from the host's home, including decor, interests and passions, to create unique pieces in their own style and medium.

I had seen the first series but had never considered applying. But I like challenge



and like to get out of my comfort zone every now and again. So I did my research, asked previous contestants and read up on social media what people had thought of the programme.

The filming began last November. The producers found the perfect house for me in St Albans where I live. After the initial meeting with the other artists in front of the camera, we were assigned a room where we would be filmed. I was in the front room with some of the owner's art works and holiday mementoes to spark my imagination. I took my sketch-book and iPad around the room, talking about several things that would inspire me, what I felt and knew about a particular object. Only a fraction made the final cut.

The next stage was to prepare a two-minute pitch at home. Surprisingly I was flooded with inspiration. I remembered from the



last series that some artists had created a mood/sketch board. As I created mine, I thought of the technical issues I would face as there was not much room for failure if I went ahead as one of the chosen artists. If I say I was very nervous, it would be an understatement!

The buyers, as I had suspected, were Indian. I knew then it would be a difficult challenge. But I gave it 110%. What I had was the strength of my work and my intimate connection to India. The speech turned out more like a three way conversation - me, the buyers and the presenter Nick Knowles. This way of communicating my idea made it easier as I no longer had to remember the whole two minutes.

I had taken my mood/sketch board for the presentation but on entering the studio I was told that this would give away too much information and could not take it in. Little did I know the other artists had theirs and were spelling out their ideas. I only found out when the programme was broadcast. Was it a disadvantage? I don't know, but at one point the buyers commented that they had no idea what I would make. They thought I was the wild card and they would not be in control.

Once the presentations were complete and the hosts had made up their minds, the three artists were called in as they revealed their choice. I did not get chosen. Part of me felt relief but part of me wanted to create that piece of sculpture. It was going to be something different and special with a hint of spice and one very unusual element.

But there was more filming to be done - the back story. I was filmed at home in my studio talking about my inspiration, showing how I work and a little about my journey into the

art world. I particularly enjoyed that part. I was more relaxed as there was no pressure.

Alongside taking part in the TV programme, I had been selected for the Craft Council's Hothouse 2020 programme. During our training, one of the sessions was about presenting yourself, the structure of your speech, how to calm your nerves and what to say in a few sentences to have a huge impact. If only I'd learned this before filming! It probably wouldn't have made a difference to the outcome of the show but I would have felt a lot more confident as a result.

Losing wasn't so bad after all. Barely had the show finished and I was swamped with requests for commissions and sold almost all of my website stock. I often ended up quickly snapping some sculptures, sending out the images to customers. The comments on social media were very humbling. Would I do it again? The answer is a resounding YES!

You can view all episodes from Series 2 via BBC iPlayer.

Instagram: [@pratimakramerceramics](https://www.instagram.com/pratimakramerceramics)

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St Albans Market Stall

 Beverly Benson



It was a bit of a shock to the system having to be anywhere by 8.00am on a Saturday, but you do really need to, because, as Jackie and John discovered, the gazebo has a mind of its own and it takes a 'man' on each leg to wrangle it into submission. There were four of us on the stall on Saturday and that is the perfect number to allow easy social distancing but still to have the manpower to cover the stall when people wanted a break. I think it helped that we all have very different work to share: Jackie's glamorous copper nudes certainly caught people's attention; John's big thrown dishes had gravitas and Angela's beautiful handcrafted pieces added a splash of colour. It was lovely to see the guild members who came by to offer encouragement on the day.

Between us we sold enough to make the day worthwhile and sales will probably increase nearer to Christmas. There is no guarantee that we will be able to secure a stall every week, but we will try. We will have to set up some kind of first come, first served system so that other guild members can sell their wares and this will keep the stall fresh, too.



A few points to remember:

- there is a knack to the gazebo - ask someone, it doesn't need to be forced
- the tempting aromas from nearby food stalls could certainly eat up your profits
- persuade someone to drop off you and your wares: it cost us £12 to park the car for the day
- bring your own wireless payment system if you have one, so that you don't need to handle cash
- have fun



Editor's note: Jackie has written details of the equipment, procedures, costs and timings that are now required of market stall holders. Please contact her if you would like to have a go selling your work this way with the Guild. Those taking part have found a deal of interest among the market goers, which they feel can only increase as Christmas approaches. So far the sales are modest but reasonable, and overall costs have been more than covered. In addition we gained three new members!

NB The gazebo is normally kept in our garage in Kings Langley, but is now being moved around St Albans in temporary accommodation. It would be wonderful to find somewhere it could be kept till Christmas so please contact Jackie if you can help.



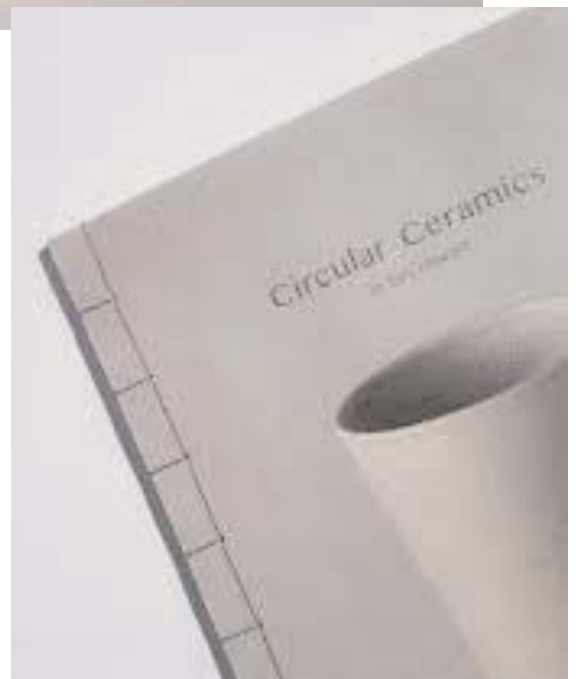


Green Corner Update!



Circular Ceramics - reproduced by kind permission of London Potters

Sara Howard, a 2020 graduate from Central Saint Martins, has published a revealing e-book on Circular Ceramics, having developed clay bodies and glazes by recycling industrial waste from the ceramics industry. She describes herself as a 'materials researcher and designer whose practice is focussed on reducing the environmental impacts of ceramic production'. Using industrial waste which would otherwise be sent to landfill, she has investigated glass and stone slurry, excavation waste from the construction industry and waste plaster from moulds. Her results identify ways to reuse this waste to create new raw materials for commercial ceramic production as well as the individual studio potter. Along with the tableware she has produced, the Crafts Council now features her research on their website at: <https://www.craftscouncil.org.uk/directory/sara-howard/circular-ceramics>. Sara's e-book is well worth a read and available for just £10 from her own website at: <https://sara-howardstudio.com/> and we are delighted she was able to join members at the **DCPG Coffee Morning on Tuesday 20th October 2020 at 10.30am** to talk briefly about her work.





The Strange Adventure of the Fitzwilliam Competition 2020

 Nicole Lyster

Twenty years ago, on Friday 13th October 2000, straight after the AGM, the Guild held its first annual competition. It was named the Stan Romer in memory of a founder member. Stan was also involved in the founding of the Pitstone museum, and the two organisations grew up together with raku firings held regularly at the museum. Stan's fine collection of ceramics books was also given to us and thus began our own library, much valued by members and now named after Stan.

On that first day the theme was 'Animals', the judge was a young ceramic sculptor called Elaine Peto, and the winning entry was a magnificent bison. The maker, Jane Kilvington, was asked to make another one, a bit smaller, to serve as our trophy which the winner keeps for one year. That little bison has so far been stabled in 20 different homes and bears the name of each winner on its base.

Later, in 2014, the competition was renamed the Fitzwilliam in memory of Mervyn, one of our longest serving and

active Chairs, Editor, and general manager.

This year's subject was PLANTERS, chosen by members at our other annual event, Potters Open Day in March. Little did we realise when we went back to our clay what a challenge it would be to create something so 'functional' and 'normal' during a pandemic. But the connectivity with growing, new life and nature was a welcome relief for those creative potters who took up the challenge. Seven intrepid potters produced as wide a variety of PLANTERS as entries; different in shape, size, method of construction, glazing, firing and planting. Each one had its own merits and every one was enjoyable to make for the potter and enjoyed by those that were part of the voting process.

BUT...

How to fairly judge a ceramic competition when you can't see or feel the ceramic pieces in all their glory? Especially when not all those who wanted to enter had access to a kiln at this time.

So

 A	 B	 C	Voting Choose your top three pieces. Order them 1, 2, 3 Email  Your letters in your preferred order. e.g. A= 1 B= 2 C= 3 See you at the AGM to vote for the winner from the top three.
 D	 E	 F	 G

The committee put its thinking caps on and came up with as fair a system as possible given the circumstances. The criteria for entry was expanded to include unfired pots, but we stuck with the need for them to be made from clay. Connectivity with members had been a challenge for most of the year, but we had risen to that challenge with great success, and it was important that as many members as possible should be involved in this competition in some way. So a vote was decided upon and an email went out to every member with a voting sheet and simple instructions.

Members responded wonderfully, with 43 people voting via email to select the top three and another 21 voting at the AGM for the winner and runners-up. In fact, the Zoom Poll was a great way to be actively involved in the AGM, and may be added to other online events in the future.

There had been suggestions for a short write up for each piece to explain the method of construction, firing and glazing, and this may be added if we ever have to run an online pottery competition again. But it wasn't considered fair to add another non-pottery dimension to the competition, and some firing methods and techniques are easy to connect to specific members. There was also a suggestion for a short video of each piece, maybe with some inspirational music as background. But the file size would prohibit it being emailed to all members, so sadly we discarded that idea. We should definitely introduce a scale rule to each picture in future to give a better understanding of size,

as that would have been most apparent in 'real life'. SO, although it was a challenge, we had a successful competition this year, and have learnt a 'new way' of doing an 'old thing'.



Congratulations to this year's winner:
Beverly Benson - PLANTER A (above)
and Runners up:

Sarah Evans - PLANTER D (below)

Ian Jones - PLANTER G

And thank you to competitors:

Jerry Seaborn - PLANTER B

Mandy English - PLANTER C

John Alderman -
PLANTER E

Nicole Lyster -
PLANTER F

A very special thank you to Sylvia Fitzwilliam for funding the prizes, and to all members who voted via email and at the AGM to make this year's competition work so well.





Guild Zoom Coffee Mornings

 Judi Tribe

We are continuing with our successful Coffee Mornings on Zoom and below are the next dates. At the start of each coffee morning there will now be a 10-15 mins focus talk from one of the Guild members or a guest speaker which will then lead into friendly pottery chats and general helpful tip tips. Please come and join us by emailing for the Zoom link from Judi Tribe - juditribe0@gmail.com (the 0 is a zero)

Dates for the next coffee mornings

Tuesday 20th October

10.30am - 12.30pm

with Sara Howard talking about her

Sustainable Ceramics

(SEE GREEN CORNER)

www.sarahowardstudio.com

Wednesday 25th November

10.30am - 12.30pm

with Fiona Booy talking about her work and the Digswell Arts Trust

www.fiona-booyceramics.co.uk.

<https://digswellarts.org>

Tuesday 15th December

10.30am - 12.30pm - TBA

Recent focus themes at last Zoom Coffee Mornings

Mandy English - Deconstructed Pots and Once Firing Techniques

At the beginning of the September's Zoom coffee morning, Mandy English gave members an enthralling talk about how she came to develop her ideas and pottery while studying for her degree at the University of Hertfordshire. Her visual presentation using the Zoom shared screen option helped her clear explanation about how she made her stunning re-imagined thrown pieces as well

as how she overcame the challenges of raw glazing and the once firing techniques of her pots to stoneware.

Environmental impact and sustainability of

resources are important to Mandy and she continues to pursue and produce her work within these parameters.



A Special Piece of Pottery

Sixteen members joined the October Coffee Morning to chat about their special pots. Each pot and the story behind it was different, personal and very touching and gave an opportunity for people to share their memories and why their pot inspired and meant so much to them. From my grandmother's pot bought from the Greet Pottery, Gloucestershire in the 1930's to three beautiful pieces bought in America which inspired the person to explore and create their own ceramics. I am sure that there will be another chance soon for members to show their treasured pieces and to listen to all the delightful stories as to how, why and where they came upon them.

Mandy English has just started to help me with these latest virtual coffee mornings and hopefully in the future more real social events and pottery related visits. If anyone would like to join with us and plan an exciting next year's 2021 programme - please email me.

See you soon on Zoom



Guild Wheels to borrow

 Ros McGuirk

The Guild has two spare wheels which are used for have a go events. They are available only to members and we re-allocate them every October around the time of the Boxmoor Autumn Fair. They come free but the following conditions are attached:

1. They must be brought to our events when ever and wherever required.
2. The borrower is expected to stay and help at the events.
3. The wheel must be kept in a dry place, used regularly and maintained.
4. PAT testing must be done at least once every two years, depending on the number of events. Usually all the wheels get tested together, though there are circumstances when the borrower may have to arrange this.



The wheels are relatively small and are easily transported in an estate car or moderate sized hatchback. They can be safely lifted out of vehicles between two reasonably fit people. A trolley is required to handle them



along paths.

One of the wheels is a shimpo (like the one we use in the church hall on Friday nights) and the other is a Wenger which is shown in the photo of a wheel with the seat folded down. The shimpo is free standing and the Wenger's seat is integral.

If you have not already got a wheel this is a great opportunity to try one out for a whole year. Your throwing skills will improve no end! (NB only basic techniques are required to show beginners how to do it, and teaching both improves your own skills and is lots of fun.)

Whether or not we will be running have a go next year, the wheels will benefit greatly from being used and we will continue to loan them out on an annual basis.

If you are interested send an email to me at ros.mcguirk@gmail.com



DCPG Officers for 20-21.

 October 10th 2020

The DCPG AGM had a good turnout of 28 members including Committee members. There was a very friendly and productive atmosphere on Zoom and business was dealt with efficiently. The Chair's Report (see full version page 2 in this Newsletter) and Treasurer's report were accepted and the current Committee members and trustees were re-elected as officers of the Guild. We all look forward to an exciting and interesting year ahead in 20-21.

The DCPG team

DCPG Trustees:

President & POD Organiser- John Higgins -
johncceramics@aol.com

Chair - Mary Anne Bonney - 56 Clarence
Road, St Albans, Herts AL1 4NG
chair@dcpg.org.uk

Vice Chair and Exhibition Organiser -
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Colin Hazelwood

Honorary Members

Asa Miller
Bipin Raithatha
Colin Hazelwood
Dorley Fieldhouse
Jane Kilvington
John Higgins
Ros McGuirk
Sylvia Fitzwilliam
and now Jean Langdon

Non - Trustees:

Secretary - Angela Bowen -
secretary@dcpg.org.uk
awynb48@googlemail.com

Membership Secretary - Audrey Hammett -
dcpgmembership@gmail.com

Library + Programme Secretary -
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SafeGuarding - safeguarding@dcpg.org.uk

Social Media Co-ordinator + Kiln site
manager at Overbourne, Boxmoor -
Amanda Toms - dcpgsocialmedia@gmail.com

Property Manager - Tony Baxter -
tonymbaxter@hotmail.com

Workshop Co-ordinator - Sharon Goodman

Visits + Social Co-ordinator - Judi Tribe -
juditribe0@gmail.com

Instagram co-ordinator - Nicole Lyster

New Members

A warm welcome to Josephine Miveld
(St Albans), Tim Mitchell (St Albans) and
Debbie de Beer (Princes Risborough).

You are joining a group of 134 mud
slingers, skip dippers, and potaholics. We
hope you enjoy our activities, such as they
are, learn more about the wonderful world
of ceramics, make new friends and help us
build a new future.

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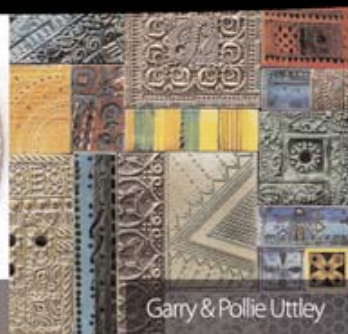
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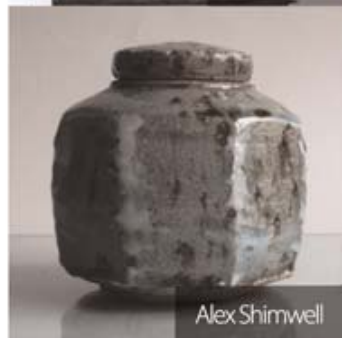
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Clockwise: Geoffrey Swindell, Sue Pryke, Illyria Pottery

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